

EDITORIAL & PUBLISHING PRODUCTION • PHILIPPINES

The publication-accuracy standard: the executive economics of editorial & publishing production outsourcing to the Philippines.

An analysis of why pages produced is a volume vanity metric, how publication-ready accuracy and editorial quality — never production throughput — decide the true cost of a publishing operation once introduced errors, style-guide breaches, reprints, and author complaints are counted, and the vendor-selection discipline that ships the page clean the first time.

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ABOUT THIS SERIES – VOLUME 84

Every editorial-production proposal is priced per page produced, because output is easy to count. This volume is about the only production outcome a publisher's imprint actually depends on: the page edited clean, composed to the house style, and proofed so the error a reader would catch never ships. The gap between producing a page and shipping one that is publication-ready is where introduced errors, reprints, and author complaints live. The full series lives at piton-global.com.

About the authors



John Maczynski
Chief Executive Officer

John has bought editorial-production capacity for three decades, and learned that the fast shop that produces every page and introduces its own errors is the most expensive one a publisher can hire — because a typo that reaches print is a reprint or an erratum, a style breach is an editor's re-do, and a garbled reference is an author complaint and a reputation ding. His standing question ignores the pages-per-day report: of the pages you produced, how many shipped publication-ready, clean on the final read? Applied at PITON-Global, that question is what clients get on every editorial sourcing decision — personally, with no account layer in between.

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Ralf Ellspermann
Chief Strategy Officer

Ralf has spent twenty-five years running Philippine editorial-production floors, and he judges a publishing team by its publication accuracy and style-guide fidelity, not its pages-per-day: whether the page shipped clean and on-house-style, or bounced back from the final proof. The production contract in Section 3 codifies what he learned rebuilding teams that composed pages fast and introduced errors. He now reads editorial providers the way he once ran them — from the final-proof error log and the author-complaint record backward.

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ABOUT PITON-GLOBAL

PITON-Global is a buyer-side advisory practice, Manila-based since 2001, that has never operated a delivery floor or taken a placement commission. Its stock-in-trade is knowing the Philippine provider market at the operating level — 1,000+ mapped operations, re-verified continuously, including each editorial team's real publication accuracy and style fidelity rather than its pages-per-day headline — and converting that knowledge into a shortlist of six to ten genuinely qualified partners per engagement. Buyers from Tripadvisor, Garmin, TSYS, HealthPartners, Yetipay, Workrise, and Norman Disney & Young have run their searches through the practice.

SECTION 01

Executive summary

-59%

Fully-loaded cost per publication-ready page vs. US onshore

99.9%

Publication-ready accuracy on vetted teams, up from 97-99%

-67%

Reduction in final-proof errors & reprints on vetted teams

6.3×

First-year ROI, reconstructed case (Section 6)

An editorial-production engagement is bought on the price per page and paid for on the errors it introduces. The vendor reports hundreds of thousands of pages produced at a fraction of the onshore cost; the publisher finds the typos and transposed figures that

reached the final proof, the style-guide breaches an in-house editor had to re-do, the mangled references and broken cross-links that drew author complaints, and the reprint bill when an error shipped anyway. The operation cleared its page count and the imprint inherited a quality problem, a rework backlog, and authors questioning the house. The gap between producing a page and shipping one publication-ready is where the real cost of cheap editorial production hides, because an error-laden page is not output delivered; it is a reprint, an erratum, and a reputation cost the contract never priced.

The Philippines — English-fluent with a deep editorial, composition, and proofreading talent pool experienced across scholarly, trade, and educational publishing — is where editorial production is delivered with the most publication-accuracy discipline, because that pool can run the clean copyedit, style-faithful composition, and zero-defect proofing that a dependable imprint demands. Five findings:

- 1 Pages produced is the industry's most flattering number.** Any shop can push pages through composition. Vetted teams are measured on outcome: publication-ready accuracy, style-guide fidelity, and clean final proofs. Weak providers quote a low per-page price the publisher repays in introduced errors, rework, and reprints. Section 2 shows the gap.
- 2 The publication-ready page, not the produced one, is the product.** A page that protects the imprint comes from editing it clean, composing it to the house style, and proofing it to zero defects — not from clearing a production queue. Teams that produce accurately ship once; teams that produce loosely introduce errors and trigger reprints that cost many times the page.
- 3 An introduced error cuts both ways — the one caught late and the one that ships.** An error caught at final proof is a re-do against the deadline; an error that ships is a reprint, an erratum, and an author who no longer trusts the house. Vetted teams hold publication accuracy at 99.9% precisely because both tails cost — the late catch and the missed one.
- 4 Reprints and author complaints, not the per-page rate, are what cost.** A page produced wrong costs the re-proof, the reprint, the erratum, and the author relationship — many times the per-page saving. Teams that produce accurately cut reprints and keep authors, and that protected reputation and schedule — not the offshore rate alone — is where the case study's return is built.
- 5 Contract on the publication-ready page, not the produced one.** The contracting failure of editorial production is paying per page and hoping it ships clean. Vetted deals price against publication-accuracy floors, style-fidelity targets, and final-proof-error ceilings, making the clean page the team's problem, which is where it belongs.

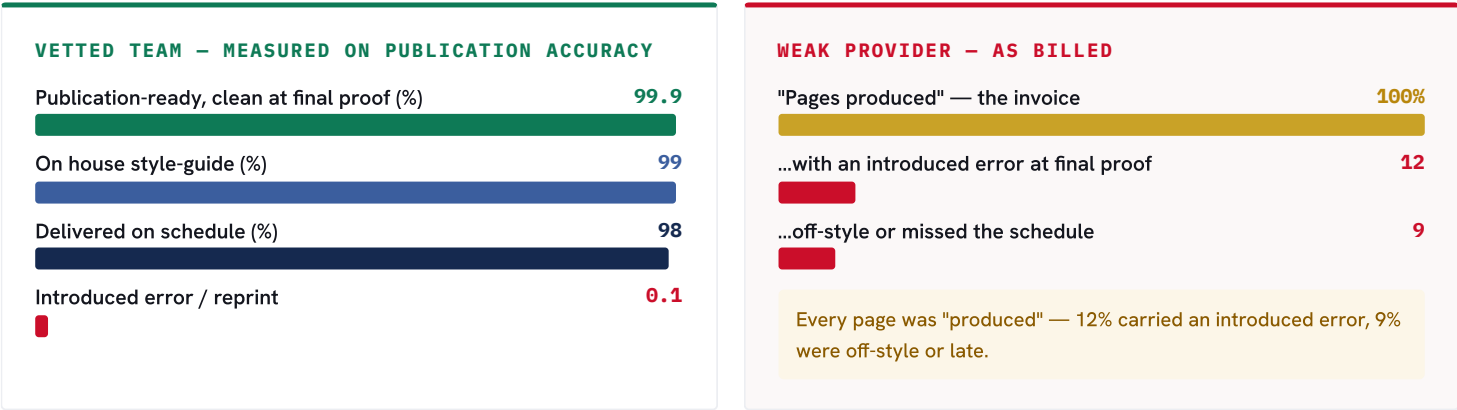
The intended reader is a production director, managing editor, or COO at a publisher or content house buying editorial production per page and paying for it in introduced errors, reprints, and author complaints. Sections 2-4 separate the teams that ship publication-ready pages from the teams that clear page counts; Sections 5-7, the method and the proof.

SECTION 02

The volume mirage: pages produced versus publication-ready pages

Figure 1 shows one title's production run two ways: as the pages-produced report a weak vendor bills, and as the publication-accuracy reality the final proof, the reprint ledger, and the author feedback experience. The pages-produced number is engineered to look like output while introduced errors, style breaches, and reprints accumulate underneath.

FIG. 1 – ONE TITLE'S RUN: PUBLICATION-ACCURACY QUALITY VS. REPORTED VOLUME



Left: PITON-Global engagement instrumentation, 2025-26, publication accuracy audited at final proof. Right: composite of pre-engagement vendor reporting reviewed in diligence.

The economics follow the publication accuracy, not the page count. On the left, 99.9 percent of pages are clean at final proof and on house style, so nothing reprints and no author complains; on the right, a cheap per-page price introduces an error on twelve percent and misses style or schedule on nine, paying in re-proofing, reprints, and author complaints at once. A low per-page price that introduces errors is not a saving; it is a reprint bill and a reputation cost, deferred to press day. The publication-accuracy audit — final-proof error rate, style-guide fidelity, schedule adherence — is the cheapest due-diligence instrument in this paper.

SECTION 03

The production contract: edit it clean, compose it to style, proof it to zero

Figure 2 lays out the three clauses of a working editorial-production contract — the machinery a floor read verifies before any per-page price is believed.

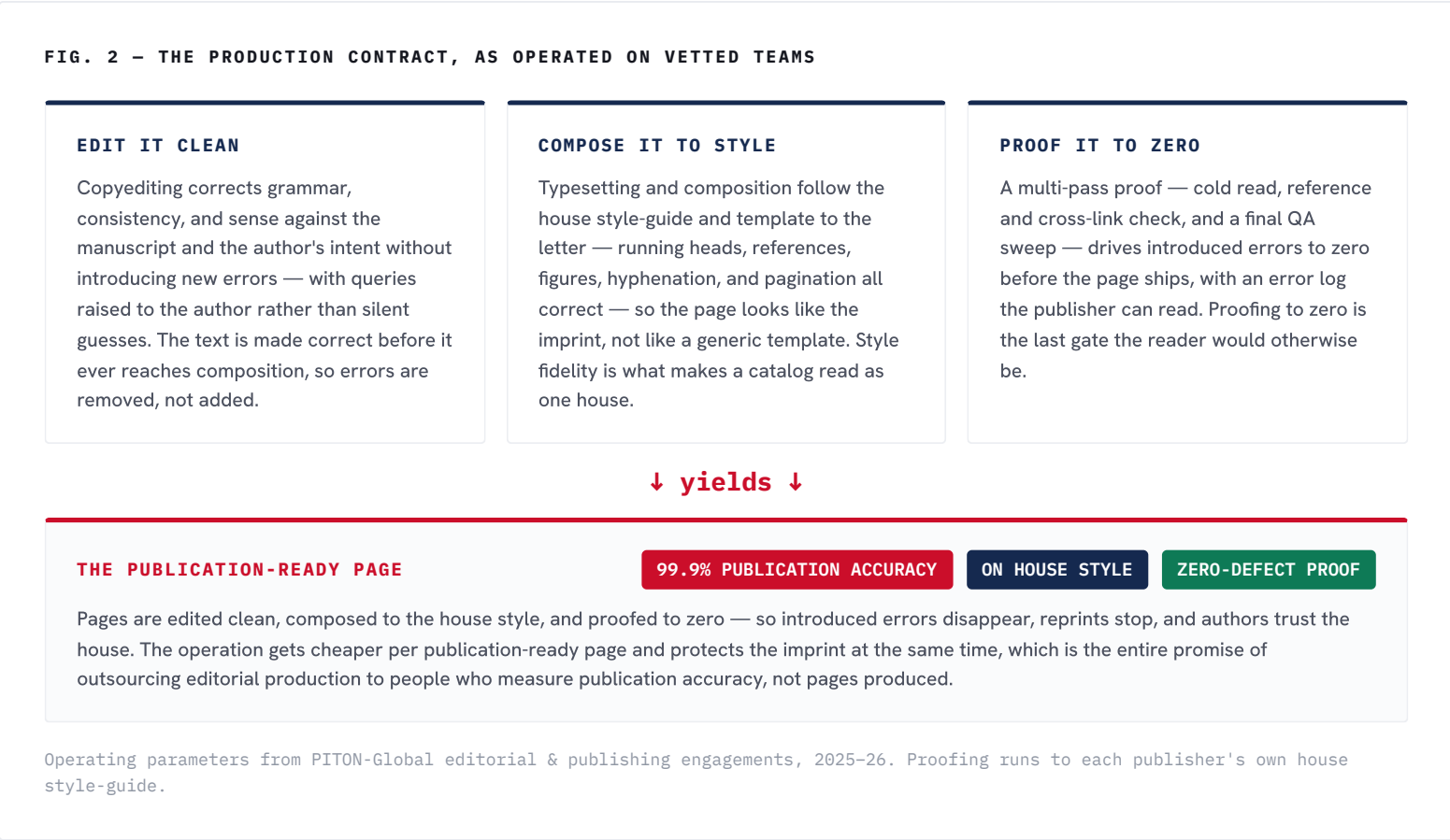


TABLE 2 – EDITORIAL-PRODUCTION BENCHMARKS, VETTED VS. BASELINE (2025-26)

METRIC	VETTED TOP TIER	BASELINE	EXECUTIVE READING
Publication-ready accuracy	99.9%	97-99%	The only page number the imprint follows
Style-guide fidelity	99%+	88-95%	One house, or a generic template
Final-proof errors / reprints vs. baseline	-67%	baseline	"Proof it to zero" — held or not
On-schedule delivery	98%+	82-90%	Press day held, or slipped
Author-satisfaction score	94%+	76-86%	Authors kept, or lost to a rival house

Source: PITON-Global editorial & publishing engagement data 2025-26; baseline = typical pre-engagement operations billed on pages produced.

The strategic read: the composition mill's -34% per page is a false economy — re-proofing, reprints, and author-complaint handling lift its true cost per publication-ready page far above the per-page gap, and a title recalled for an error is a cost no rate recovers. The vetted Manila team's -59% is real because it is measured where the value is: the page edited clean, composed to style, and proofed to zero. Buy on pages produced and you buy the right column of Figure 1; buy on cost-per-publication-ready-page and you buy publication accuracy — the same discipline every volume in this series keeps arriving at from a different door.

SECTION 05

Sourcing discipline: the 7-Step Vendor Vetting Framework, applied to editorial production

Editorial-production diligence adds one hard requirement to every step: a per-page price is real only when the publication accuracy behind it survives a blind re-proof against the manuscript and house style-guide. The funnel below is representative of a 40-80-seat editorial-production search.

FIG. 3 – THE 7-STEP FRAMEWORK AS AN EDITORIAL-PRODUCTION FUNNEL

STEP	WHAT IT ELIMINATES IN AN EDITORIAL-PRODUCTION SEARCH	FIELD REMAINING
1 Requirements definition	Throughput-first scoping: fixes the publication-accuracy floor, the style-fidelity target, the final-proof-error ceiling, and the schedule the operation must meet by title type	1,000+
2 Market mapping	Composition mills: operations that bill page volume and treat introduced errors and reprints as the client's problem, and generalist floors with no editorial, composition, or proofing depth	~44
3 Capability screening	Teams without the machinery: trained copyeditors and proofreaders, audited accuracy history, a multi-pass proof workflow, composition-platform proficiency, and coverage across your title mix	~13
4 Compliance & security audit	Weak governance: manuscript-confidentiality and embargo protection, rights/permissions handling, access controls on pre-publication files, SOC 2 scope covering the production stack	~8
5 Operational diligence	The blind re-proof: re-proof a sample against the manuscript and style-guide for introduced errors; audit the reprint and erratum ledger; interview on how they handle an ambiguous author query	4–6
6 Competitive RFP & negotiation	Per-page pricing: finalists bid against publication-accuracy floors, style-fidelity targets, and final-proof-error ceilings — all carrying credits for pages that ship with an introduced error	2–3
7 Transition & launch governance	Cold start: the team calibrates against your style-guide, templates, and title types on a sample before it produces live pages, with the accuracy floor certified before steady state, PITON-Global embedded buyer-side	1

Field-remaining counts represent a 40–80-seat editorial-production search, PITON-Global engagements 2024–26.

The standing guarantees hold: **vendor neutrality** — PITON-Global operates no production floors, composes no pages, and takes no placement economics, so the shortlist reflects audited publication-accuracy performance, not inventory; **right-sizing** — teams for whom your operation is a flagship account. Six to ten genuinely qualified providers, delivered within 48–72 hours, free to the buyer, competing through a fully transparent, fair, comprehensive, and highly competitive RFP.

SECTION 06 • ANONYMIZED CASE STUDY

Re-basing the operation on publication accuracy: a 55-seat editorial-production rebuild, reconstructed

Engagement PB-090 is a US scholarly-and-trade publisher — producing roughly 640,000 pages a year across books, journals, and educational titles — that had offshored editorial production to a per-page composition mill. The page price was excellent; the publication accuracy was not: introduced errors were reaching final proof at 12%, style-guide breaches were forcing in-house re-dos, two titles had reprinted for errors that shipped, and author complaints were rising. The production director wanted the arbitrage without the reprints and the author churn. Identifying details are anonymized under NDA.

SELECTION (WEEKS 0-8, BLIND RE-PROOFS)

Requirements fixed a 99.9% publication-accuracy floor, a 99% style-fidelity target, and a final-proof-error ceiling, with a mandatory multi-pass proof workflow. Mapping produced 44 claimants; the machinery screen — trained copyeditors/proofreaders, audited accuracy, multi-pass proof, composition proficiency — left 13; the confidentiality-and-embargo audit left 8. Blind re-proofs against the manuscript and style-guide shortlisted 5. A Manila team won priced against publication accuracy and style fidelity, with a blind re-proof written into the reporting spec.

TRANSITION (MONTHS 2-6, CALIBRATED FIRST)

The team calibrated against the publisher's style-guide, templates, and title types on sample pages before producing live; the accuracy floor was certified in month 2. The proof-and-QA loop fed editor feedback continuously. By month 6 publication accuracy reached 99.9%, style fidelity hit 99%, final-proof errors and reprints fell 67%, on-schedule delivery reached 98%, and author satisfaction rose to 94%. PITON-Global chaired the publication-accuracy review board to steady state.

TABLE 3 – PB-090 FIRST-YEAR VALUE BUILD-UP (US\$)		
VALUE COMPONENT	YEAR 1	BASIS
Labor arbitrage on the 55-seat operation	\$1.58M	103.1k productive hrs × (\$24.80 – \$9.50)
Reprints & errata eliminated (accurate pages)	\$0.68M	Reprint and erratum runs removed by higher accuracy
In-house re-do time reclaimed	\$0.34M	Editor hours returned from fixing off-style pages
Author-retention & schedule value	\$0.18M	Author churn and slipped-title exposure removed
Gross value created	\$2.78M	
Less: engagement & transition costs	(\$0.44M)	Calibration, proof-loop build, style-guide/template integration; advisory fee \$0 (provider-paid model)
Net value ÷ cost = first-year ROI	6.3×	\$2.78M ÷ \$0.44M

Figures rounded; accuracy, reprint, and author effects audit-verified. Method in Methodology & notes.

Fifty-seven percent arbitrage, forty-three percent from eliminated reprints, reclaimed in-house re-do time, and protected author relationships — a typical split for the series, earned because the operation was re-based on publication accuracy rather than page volume. Every line traces to a diligence step: the accuracy floor to Step 1, the accuracy-based pricing to Step 6, the multi-pass proof workflow to Step 3's contract. The production director's line at the year-one review: "The page price barely moved. What moved is that nothing reprints anymore — and my authors stopped emailing me about typos."

SECTION 07

The executive playbook: governance for the first 180 days

An editorial-production transition succeeds when the team is measured and paid on publication accuracy and style fidelity — client in command throughout.

DAYS 0-30

Define accuracy, contract on it

Set the publication-accuracy floor, the style-fidelity target, and the final-proof-error and schedule thresholds with production leadership before launch, and document the multi-pass proof and author-query workflow by title type. Contract against publication accuracy and style fidelity — never per page alone — with floors carrying credits and a shipped error a defined breach. Stand up the blind re-proof as the program's arbiter of truth.

DAYS 30-90

Calibrate, prove the floor

Calibrate the team against your style-guide, templates, and title types on sample pages before it produces live; certify the accuracy floor and the multi-pass proof loop. Switch on the proof-and-QA loop from day one. Publish the production dashboard: publication accuracy, style fidelity, final-proof error rate, on-schedule delivery, author satisfaction.

DAYS 90-180

Produce live, certify steady state

Route live titles to the team only after it holds the accuracy floor and style-fidelity target. Review the board monthly with the final-proof-error and reprint trends on the table. Certify steady state on two months at floor including a peak-list season; hand over on documented criteria; keep the blind re-proof standing.

THE FIVE FAILURE MODES WE ARE HIRED TO PREVENT

Paying per page while errors reach print · producing pages instead of editing them clean · composing off the house style-guide · guessing an author query rather than raising it · producing live before publication accuracy is proven. All five are settled at selection and contract.

The editorial-production argument, in one sentence: a produced page is output and a publication-ready page is an imprint protected and an author kept, and a vetted Philippine team delivers –59% cost per publication-ready page with 99.9% publication accuracy, final-proof errors and reprints cut by two-thirds, and style fidelity above 99% — for buyers who blind re-proof the accuracy instead of counting pages produced, and compete the finalists through a fully transparent, fair, comprehensive, and highly competitive RFP. Anyone can produce a page. We make sure you buy the team that ships it clean.

METHODOLOGY & NOTES

How the numbers were built

Accuracy and reprint figures (Fig. 1, Table 2) derive from engagement instrumentation in PITON-Global editorial & publishing engagements, 2025–26. Publication accuracy is measured by blind re-proofing produced pages against the manuscript and house style-guide; style fidelity, final-proof error rate, on-schedule delivery, and author satisfaction against the client's pre-engagement baseline. The weak-provider column is a composite of pre-engagement vendor reporting reviewed in diligence, shown for contrast.

Cost-per-publication-ready-page figures (Table 1) are fully loaded — wages, benefits and statutory charges, facilities, composition-platform and technology tooling, management and QA overhead including proof leads, and attrition-driven recruiting — divided by pages shipped clean, on-style, and on schedule, with error-carrying, off-style, or reprinted pages excluded from the denominator; US comparators reflect fully-loaded in-house cost on the same basis. A publication-ready page is edited clean, composed to the house style, and proofed to zero defects.

The case study (PB-090) is anonymized under NDA; volumes and dates are generalized, figures rounded. Accuracy, reprint, and author effects are audit-verified; the reprints-eliminated line reflects removed reprint and erratum runs, and the author-retention line is a conservative estimate. ROI = net first-year value ÷ all engagement-related client costs. PITON-Global's advisory fee is provider-paid and appears at \$0 in the client cost base; neutrality safeguards are documented at piton-global.com.

Market context draws on IBPAP reporting and PITON-Global's proprietary provider mapping (1,000+ operations; publication accuracy and style-fidelity performance re-verified May 2026). Proofing runs to each publisher's own house style-guide and is treated here as an operating fundamental. Estimates and projections are PITON-Global analysis and should be cited as such. The full series is available at piton-global.com.



Would your provider's page price survive a blind re-proof?

Thirty minutes with John will tell you. Free to buyers, strictly vendor-neutral — a publication-accuracy-verified shortlist within two to three business days.

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